

M-12-42-12

1880s

Awkard Family Cemetery  
Big Woods Community  
Private

This small burying ground is located on a quarter<sup>acre</sup> portion of the tract purchased in 1846 by Rev. Elijah Awkard, a free Black minister in the antebellum era. Before the Civil War he became one of the largest Black landowners in Montgomery County. The nearby Methodist church in the Jerusalem community is named after him, and his descendants continue to live in the county. The cemetery is no longer maintained and is one of the more important sites related to the history of free Blacks in Montgomery County.

## MARYLAND HISTORICAL TRUST

M: 12-42-1  
Mag1 #

## INVENTORY FORM FOR STATE HISTORIC SITES SURVEY

**1 NAME**

HISTORIC

Awkard Family Cemetery

AND/OR COMMON

**2 LOCATION**

STREET &amp; NUMBER

West side of Beallsville Road

CITY, TOWN

Beallsville

☒ VICINITY OF

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

8

STATE

Maryland

COUNTY

Montgomery

**3 CLASSIFICATION**

## CATEGORY

☐ DISTRICT☐ BUILDING(S)☐ STRUCTURE☒ SITE☐ OBJECT

## OWNERSHIP

☐ PUBLIC☒ PRIVATE☐ BOTH

## PUBLIC ACQUISITION

☐ IN PROCESS☐ BEING CONSIDERED

No

## STATUS

☐ OCCUPIED☒ UNOCCUPIED☐ WORK IN PROGRESS

## ACCESSIBLE

☒ YES: RESTRICTED☐ YES: UNRESTRICTED☐ NO

## PRESENT USE

☐ AGRICULTURE☐ COMMERCIAL☐ EDUCATIONAL☐ ENTERTAINMENT☐ GOVERNMENT☐ INDUSTRIAL☐ MILITARY☐ MUSEUM☐ PARK☐ PRIVATE RESIDENCE☐ RELIGIOUS☐ SCIENTIFIC☐ TRANSPORTATION☒ OTHER**4 OWNER OF PROPERTY**

Woods &amp; Cemetery

NAME

William and Anne Speary

Telephone #: 301-349-3490

STREET &amp; NUMBER

21150 Beallsville Road

CITY, TOWN

Barnesville

☒ VICINITY OF

STATE, zip code

Maryland

**5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**COURTHOUSE,  
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC

Montgomery County Courthouse

Liber #: 4830

Folio #: 189

STREET &amp; NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

Rockville

STATE

Maryland

**6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE

None

DATE

☐ FEDERAL ☐ STATE ☐ COUNTY ☐ LOCALDEPOSITORY FOR  
SURVEY RECORDS

CITY, TOWN

STATE

**7 DESCRIPTION**

M:12-42-1

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED      DATE _____
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

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DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

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The house of the Awkard is no longer standing, and there are no living informants who remember it. The only remains of the Awkard family presence is their cemetery. It consists of upright gravestones for the parents and smaller horizontal markers for the children. The markers are inscribed as follows:

1. Rev. Elijah Awkard  
Died Dec. 4, 1883  
Aged 76 years, 8 months, 3 days
2. Annie Awkard  
Wife of Rev. E.Z. Awkard  
Died May 26, 1880  
Aged 73 years, 2 months, 23 days
3. C. Awkard  
Aged 12 years
4. J. Awkard  
Aged 25 years
5. I. Awkard  
Aged 30 years

The cemetery is no longer maintained, and the gravestones have been knocked over.

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

PERIOD		AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)	
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		<b>Black History</b>	
				<b>Local History</b>	

SPECIFIC DATES

1880s

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Awkard family was one of the founders of the Big Woods community, and Elijah Awkard, one of the largest Black landowners before the Civil War in Montgomery County. His will -- written and probated in 1883 - RWC 6/347 - shows that Rev. Awkard purchased a tract in 1846 of 37 acres. Later it became the Big Woods community.

He purchased it from William Brewer. Upon his death, a 1/4 acre tract was set aside for a family burying ground as stipulated in the will, and the 37 acre tract divided by an east-west line into two lots. The northern-most lot went to his grandson, Enoch Randall Awkard, and the southern lot to his other grandson, Jeremiah Pervis Preston Awkard.

According to his will, Awkard owned two other larger tracts: one of 126 acres (minus a portion devised to the B & O Railroad) that he purchased from William and Mary Brewer in 1855; the other he purchased from James and Annie E. Trundle in 1855, consisting of 55 3/4 acres. Both tracts were to be sold at public auction and the proceeds divided among his heirs. The result is that Rev. Awkard owned 163 acres before the Civil War, making him one of the largest Black landowners in the county.

In addition to being a prominent landowner, Awkard was also a minister, and Elijah's Rest M.E. Church north of Poolesville was named after him, at the suggestion of his grandson who was pastor there for many years.

The cemetery is truly important since it marks one of the beginning points of the Big Woods community. Efforts will continue to be made to locate family photographs of the Awkards, but so far, none have been found.

The site is shown on the 1879 Atlas of Montgomery County of George Hopkins, and is identified as the residence of Rev. E. Awkard. Near to his home is the "school house", which was also the Mt. Zion Church. It stood at the site of the cemetery and no longer remains.

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

**9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES**

Oral interviews (not taped) with Fred and Jane Stearns

Land Records of Montgomery County, County Courthouse, Rockville, Md.

and Wills, Unibank Building, Rockville, Md.

Atlas of Montgomery County, 1879, George M. Hopkins, Reprinted by Montgomery County Historical Society, Rockville, Md.

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

**10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA**

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY \_\_\_\_\_

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE

COUNTY

STATE

COUNTY

**11 FORM PREPARED BY**

NAME / TITLE

George W. McDaniel, Surveyor

ORGANIZATION

Sugarloaf Regional Trails

STREET & NUMBER

Box 87

CITY OR TOWN

Dickerson

DATE

1/79

TELEPHONE

926-4510

STATE

Maryland

The Maryland Historic Sites Inventory was officially created by an Act of the Maryland Legislature, to be found in the Annotated Code of Maryland, Article 41, Section 181 KA, 1974 Supplement.

The Survey and Inventory are being prepared for information and record purposes only and do not constitute any infringement of individual property rights.

RETURN TO: Maryland Historical Trust  
The Shaw House, 21 State Circle  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401  
(301) 267-1438



Durand Family Cemetery  
M-12-42-~~2~~1

Big Woods Community  
photo by George McDaniel  
P/79